

April 10, 2007

Melissa Miller-Hensen  
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative  
C/o California Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group Nomination

Dear Ms. Miller-Hensen and MLPA Staff,

I am writing to apply for a position on the Marine Life Protection Act North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. I have both a personal and professional interest in the MLPA process and look forward to the opportunity to work with the State of California and members of the Regional Stakeholder Group to craft a proposal that benefits marine species while providing flexibility for fishing and other forms of recreation. I kayak, sail, and fish (5-10 times each per year) in my spare time and live near the coast in Marin County. I have a personal stake in the end result of the North Central Coast region process and I am hopeful for its future success.

I am also the Executive Director of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC), located in Point Reyes Station, which is a grassroots conservation organization representing over 1200 members, 90% of which live in Marin County. I have a Masters of Science in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana and eight years of experience evaluating federal, state, and local resource management plans. I have decided to make the MLPA process a top priority for the organization. I have the time, inclination, and interest to see this project through and help make it a success.

Due to the un-incorporated nature of the towns in Marin County's coastal zone, such as Point Reyes Station and Bolinas, there are no local elected officials, such as a mayor or town council, to democratically represent local interests. Thus, I am also considered by many members of the community to be an ad hoc representative of un-incorporated West Marin. People regularly stop by the EAC office to talk and we work to find solutions to a broad list of natural resource management and wildlife concerns. This puts me in a unique position to be able to empower and inform not only the EAC's members, but other members of the community as well. In this light, you should receive letters of support for my nomination from the Point Reyes Village Association, Tomales Bay Watershed Council, the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network and Point Reyes Bookstore.

The EAC of West Marin stands out among environmental groups because of its bioregional focus, locally based membership, and its ability to be in close communication with active members of the community. The staff and board of the EAC all live, work and play in western Marin. It's our home too, which gives us a different perspective and broad degree openness to working with others in the community to help craft real solutions that cross partisan lines. The EAC is known for its ability to unite disparate stakeholder interests to find solutions to environmental and social challenges.

Therefore, it is no surprise that when the MLPA process began a number of years ago, Point Reyes National Seashore asked the EAC to work with area fisherman and other stakeholders to craft a preemptive MLPA-style proposal for the Marin coastline. While the proposal that was created by the EAC, National Seashore, Bolinas Rod and Reel Club and local fisherman may not be the proper format

for this process, for it included bag limits and other proportional restrictions, it was an important opportunity to pro-actively work together to find local solutions to a statewide opportunity. The EAC is, therefore, already invested in the MLPA process and has fostered a strong, collaborative relationship with fisherman in coastal Marin County. We count some of them as members.

While I hope that we will be able to craft a plan that provides substantial benefits to marine habitat and the species that depend upon them, I have no hidden agenda or fixed expectations. Inherently, I feel that what is good for fish is good for fisherman as well. There are beneficial ways to balance marine conservation with human use of our natural resources. I hope to be involved as a responsible participant in a shared process that brings differing stakeholders together to reach a common, long-term vision for Marine Life Protected Areas in the North Central Coast region. I also do not intend to exclusively represent the stakeholders in the Marin community, as I feel that all should share the benefits and burdens. Ecologically speaking, marine species do not adhere to administrative boundaries like the Marin-Sonoma county line. The health of upwelling patterns in the Point Arena area, for example, is vitally important to ensuring healthy ecosystem processes on the Marin coast. Only a regionally balanced plan will ensure that the future network of interconnected MPAs serves the purpose for which it is intended.

One example of my collaborative nature is as the lead organizer from 2002-2005 for the Don't Poach the Powder campaign, based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. It's a print and radio media based public education campaign aimed at informing the public about the importance and locations of state designated winter wildlife closure areas to provide human-free habitat during the harsh winter months. The campaign is a success because we built a strong coalition, including the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Bridger-Teton National Forest, the Park Service, local conservation groups, snowmobile and snowshoe outfitters and dozens of local businesses. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation gave the Don't Poach the Powder campaign its Conservation and Education Award in Spring 2005, highlighting the campaigns grassroots focus and broad coalition-building efforts. I believe that collaboration is vitally important to creating a positive outcome in the MLPA process and hope that I can foster that kind of attitude if chosen to be on the Regional Stakeholder Group.

Whether or not I am included as a member of the stakeholder group, I plan to ensure EAC's involvement in the MLPA process. Nonetheless, I urge you to consider that we would be much more effective as a representative of local community and regional interests as a part of the Regional Stakeholder Group than as another outside interest. My collaborative, inclusive working philosophy, willingness to actively listen to differing viewpoints, and enthusiasm for the project make me an ideal candidate for the difficult process that lies ahead. I have the patience, youthful energy, perseverance and experience to help make the MLPA process a big success.

Thank you for the potential opportunity to serve on the North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. If you have any questions or wish to speak further about my involvement in this process, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Smith", written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Frederick Smith, Jr.  
Executive Director  
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin